

Protocol for an integrated data request of test results from the laboratories of pathological anatomy

SNOMED 3.5VF - users version February 2025

Cancer diagnoses & early detection of cancer
(breast, colorectal and cervix)

Belgian Cancer Registry



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Introduction

This document will provide a set of instructions on how to transfer data on cancer diagnosis and test results of early cancer detection to the Belgian Cancer Registry. The aim is to provide a clear description of a standardized and integrated protocol describing how data should be transferred, allowing us to process this information and enabling the use of your data e.g. for national and international descriptive statistics on cancer incidence. **This version includes the modifications associated with the switch to primary HPV cervical cancer screening for women aged 30-64. We expect that these modifications will only be implemented if feasible without requiring additional IT investments.**

Please transfer this document to your IT service responsible for assembling the dataset(s) and/or also to all the pathologists who deliver data.

The legal basis for the work of the Belgian Cancer Registry can be found in: The law of 13 December 2006 called:

'Wet houdende diverse bepalingen betreffende gezondheid (1), hoofdstuk VI, Artikel 39'

'Loi portant dispositions diverses en matière de santé (1), chapitre VI, Article 39'

Changes in this law relevant to this data request were published in the 'Belgisch Staatsblad' / 'Moniteur Belge' on June 2nd, 2010 (art. 29).

See <https://www.ejustice.just.fgov.be/eli/loi/2015/05/10/2015A24141/justel> for the consolidated version of this law.

A Royal Decree, published in the 'Belgisch Staatsblad' / 'Moniteur Belge' on February 13th, 2012, links the ratification of the laboratories for pathological anatomy to the participation in the cancer registration.

Contact information

For additional information or support, please contact the Belgian Cancer Registry at:

02/250 10 10 or info@kankerregister.org / info@registreducancer.org

Or – by preference – your contact person in the Belgian Cancer Registry.

Additional information can also be found at :

<https://kankerregister.org/nl> / www.registreducancer.org

1. Data transfer: general principles

1.1. Which data should be transferred?

The Belgian Cancer Registry kindly asks you to transfer all data concerning these 4 topics:

1. One structured file containing all encoded **cancer diagnoses** and a separate file with the written reports (i.e. 'protocols');
2. One structured file containing the encoded test results of all **breast specimens** and a separate file with the written reports (i.e. 'protocols');
3. One structured file containing the encoded test results of all **colorectal specimens** and a separate file with the written reports (i.e. 'protocols');
4. One structured file containing the encoded test results of all **cervical/vaginal specimens (smears, HPV tests and biopsies)** and a separate file with the written reports (i.e. 'protocols').

A detailed description of each data set is stated below.

Remark: following these procedures, it is normal that if a cancer is diagnosed it may result in double registration: once in the 'cancer' file and once in the 'breast', 'colorectal' or 'cervical' file.

Analyses done on request of other laboratories have to be delivered by either the laboratory that executed these tests OR by the laboratory that asked for the tests. This should be a mutual consent between laboratories, but the applicant of the test has to guarantee the information reaches the BCR.

However, for cervical samples both the laboratory that executed these tests AND the laboratory that asked for the tests should deliver the results to BCR.

1.2. *Data format*

- A. The format of the structured file is a tab separated text. Adding a standardized header to these structured files allows faster and more efficient processing. The correct header names for the cancer, breast, cervix and colorectal files are found in the table in section 2.1.D.
- B. The anonymous protocols should preferably be submitted in one file as a tab separated text format with a unique and clear delimiter between the different protocols. This delimiter should not appear in the protocols. The specimen number should be mentioned in the protocol. Only .doc and .txt files will be accepted. Separated .dot, .pdf, .html and other files are to be avoided. An example is available on our website :[En général | Belgian Cancer Registry](#) .

1.3. *Means of delivery*

Data should be delivered by uploading on the sFTP-server of the Belgian Cancer Registry. Please read the sFTP-manual in which the simple procedure is explained ([sFTP manuel d'utilisation v2.0.pdf](#))

The login details for the sFTP (username and password) are no longer provided by phone, but through an automated e-mail message that includes a link that can be used to obtain a password for the sFTP. Attention: this secure link can only be opened once (please keep the password safe). We also invite you to check your spam emails.

The data you delivered by sFTP must be protected by a password (chosen by yourself) that you can communicate by telephone when you inform your contact that data have been placed on the sFTP-server.

Datatransfer by e-mail (even if the file is secured by a password) is not allowed. E-mail can only be used to transfer protocol-numbers or anonymized protocols. Once data allow identification of the patient, e-mail cannot be accepted!

1.4. Timing of the delivery

The data of the cancer diagnoses, breast and colorectal samples are asked 3 times a year. Data of the cervical/vaginal samples 12 times a year. Once a year, all data of a complete calendar year is retrospectively requested to warrant the completeness of the BCR registries. The data transfers are expected by the 10th of each month. An overview of the timing for data delivery in 2025 and begin 2026 is given in the table below as example.

Deadline delivery	Data	
	CL & BR & CO	CX
10/02/2025	full 2024	full 2024 + H1 (January) 2025
10/03/2025		H2 (February) 2025
10/04/2025		H3 (March) 2025
10/05/2025	T1 (January - April) 2025	H4 (April) 2025
10/06/2025		H5 (May) 2025
10/07/2025		H6 (June) 2025
10/08/2025		H7 (July) 2025
10/09/2025	T2 (May - August) 2025	H8 (August)
10/10/2025		H9 (September)
10/11/2025		H10 (October)
10/12/2025		H11 (November)
10/01/2026		H12 (December)
10/02/2026	full 2025	full 2025 + H1 (January) 2026

CL: all cancer diagnoses; BR: breast samples; CO: colorectal specimens; CX: cervical/vaginal samples

1.5 When a laboratory has several activity centres

- Separate delivery of the data of the different activity centres is possible when the name of the specific activity centre, responsible for the analysis and registration of the samples, is clearly mentioned.
- One delivery, containing the activity of all centres, is also allowed provided that an extra variable is added, in particular the name of the activity centre that was responsible for the analysis and registration of the sample.
- Only the main laboratory will receive a financial reimbursement for the collaboration with the Belgian Cancer Registry (no longer every single activity centre).

2. Data transfer: detailed overview

2.1. Datasets

2.1.A. Dataset for cancer diagnoses

	Field	Compulsory (C) Optional (O) Highly Recommended (HR)	Format	Short comment (for details see further)
1	INSZ/NISS	C	11 characters, text format without space	Leading zero's should be conserved! ('TEXT' format therefore necessary)
2	Last name	O/C	Free text field	Compulsory if INSZ/NISS unknown
3	First name	O/C	Free text field	Compulsory if INSZ/NISS unknown
4	Sex	C	Male or Female	
5	Date of birth	C	yyyymmdd	
6	Date of death	O	yyyymmdd	Only if applicable
7	Postal code	C	Free text field	
8	Country code	C	2 characters, text format	ISO-code of the legal residence of the person
9	Specimen number	C	Free text field	Should match the specimen number in the protocol
10	Date specimen was taken	C	yyyymmdd	
11	Requesting hospital/laboratory	O	Free text field	Name of the hospital/laboratory that requests the pathological examination.
12	Diagnostic procedure	O/HR	Free text field; P-code may be used	Please provide the significance of your codes in a separate file or mail
13	Organ	C	Free text field; T-code or ICDO-3 topo code	All organ codes (Only use valid SNOMED organ codes) *
14	Laterality	O/HR	1 = left 2 = right G-code may be used	Only if applicable and not already included in the organ code
15	Morphology	C	Free text field; M-code	All histology codes (Only use valid SNOMED or ICD-O-3 morphology codes) *
16	Differentiation grade	O	Free text field	Histological grading and differentiation
17	pT	O/C	Free text field	TNM 8th edition from 2017 onwards
18	pN	O/C	Free text field	TNM 8th edition from 2017 onwards
19	pM	O/C	Free text field	TNM 8th edition from 2017 onwards
20	Degree of certainty (about morphology code)	O	1 = uncertain 2 = differential diagnosis 3 = certain	This field can be replaced by a comment field

O=Optional; C=Compulsory; O/C=Compulsory if INSZ/NISS unknown; HR=highly recommended

* See also 'Code Book SNOMED – SHORTLIST' and 'Coding manual for registration - SNOMED version 3.5VF' ([Codage et stadification | Belgian Cancer Registry](#))

2.1.B. Dataset for breast and colorectal specimens

	Field	Compulsory (C) Optional (O) Highly Recommended (HR)	Format	Short comment (for details see further)
1	INSZ/NISS	C	11 characters, text format without space	Leading zero's should be conserved! (‘TEXT’ format therefore necessary)
2	Last name	O/C	Free text field	Compulsory if INSZ/NISS unknown
3	First name	O/C	Free text field	Compulsory if INSZ/NISS unknown
4	Sex	C	Male or Female	
5	Date of birth	C	yyyymmdd	
6	Date of death	O	yyyymmdd	Only if applicable
7	Postal code	C	Free text field	
8	Country code	C	2 characters, text format	ISO-code of the legal residence of the person
9	Specimen number	C	Free text field	Should match the specimen number in the protocol
10	Date specimen was taken	C	yyyymmdd	
11	Requesting hospital/laboratory	O	Free text field	Name of the hospital/laboratory that requests the pathological examination.
12	RIZIV/INAMI number of the applicant of the test	C	11 numbers text format without space	
13	Diagnostic procedure	O/HR	Free text field; P-code may be used	Please provide the significance of your codes in a separate file or mail
14	Organ	C	Free text field; T-code or ICDO-3 topo code	File breast: T-codes for breast File colorectal: T-codes for colon, rectum, anus (Only use valid SNOMED organ codes) *
15	Laterality	O	1 = left 2 = right or G-code	Only if applicable and not already included in the organ code
16	Morphology	C	Free text field; M-code	All test results including negative results (Only use valid SNOMED or ICD-O-3 morphology codes) *
17	Degree of certainty (about morphology code)	O	1 = uncertain 2 = differential diagnosis 3 = certain	This field can be replaced by a comment field
18	Nomenclature number(s)	O	Text format without space	Different numbers to be separated by commas " , "

O=Optional; C=Compulsory; O/C=Compulsory if INSZ/NISS unknown; HR=highly recommended

* See also ‘Code Book SNOMED – SHORTLIST’ and ‘Coding manual for registration - SNOMED version 3.5VF’ ([Codage et stadification | Belgian Cancer Registry](#))

2.1.C. Dataset for test results of cervical/vaginal smears and biopsies

	Field	Compulsory (C) Optional (O) Highly Recommended (HR)	Format	Short comment (for details see further)
1	INSZ/NISS	C	11 characters, text format without space	Leading zero's should be conserved! ('TEXT' format therefore necessary)
2	Last name	O/C	Free text field	Compulsory if INSZ/NISS unknown
3	First name	O/C	Free text field	Compulsory if INSZ/NISS unknown
4	Sex	C	Female	
5	Date of birth	C	yyyymmdd	
6	Date of death	O	yyyymmdd	Only if applicable
7	Postal code	C	Free text field	
8	Country code	C	2 characters, text format	ISO-code of the legal residence of the person
9	Specimen number	C	Free text field	Should match the specimen number in the protocol
10	Date specimen was taken	C	yyyymmdd	
11	Requesting hospital/laboratory	O	Free text field	Name of the hospital/laboratory that requests the pathological examination.
12	RIZIV/INAMI number of the applicant of the test	C	11 numbers text format without space	
13	Quality of the specimen	C	SUF, INSU	Only for pap smears
14	Diagnostic procedure	HR	Free text field: P-code may be used	Please provide the significance of your codes in a separate file or mail
15	Organ	C	Free text field: T-code or ICDO-3 topo code	T-code for cervix (only use valid SNOMED organ codes) or ICDO-3 topo code for cervix*
16	Morphology	C	Free text field: M-code	All test results including negative results, benign and premalignant lesions. (Only use valid SNOMED or ICD-O-3 morphology codes)*
17	Degree of certainty (about morphology code)	O	1 = uncertain 2 = differential diagnosis 3 = certain	This field can be replaced by a comment field
18	HPV high risk test results	C if HPV test performed	HPV-, HPV+, HPVi	
19	HPV high risk types detected	C if HPV test performed	HP16, HP18, ... Free text field	Different HPV genotypes to be separated by commas ","
20	Nomenclature number(s)	C**	Text format without space	Different numbers to be separated by commas ","

O=Optional; C=Compulsory; O/C=Compulsory if INSZ/NISS unknown; HR=highly recommended

* See also 'Code Book SNOMED – SHORTLIST' and 'Coding manual for registration - SNOMED version 3.5VF' ([Codage et stadification | Belgian Cancer Registry](#))

** From 01/01/2025 on, nomenclature numbers for cervical/vaginal samples are compulsory

2.1.D. Summary of all datasets

The table below summarises all datasets. The dataset for cancer diagnoses is following international guidelines for cancer registries. Those for the prevention files are according to the need of the Centres for Cancer Detection in Belgium.

The correct header names for the cancer, breast, cervix and colorectal files are found in the table below. For your information, if a header name is not present in the files e.g. 'Diagnostic procedure' this is not an issue if this is not a mandatory variable.

	VARIABLES FOR SNOMED USERS	Headers for BCR	DATASET FOR CANCER DIAGNOSES	DATASET FOR BREAST AND COLON PREVENTION FILE	DATASET FOR CERVIX PREVENTION FILE
1	INSZ/NISS	patient_id	C	C	C
2	Last name	patient_id name	O/C	O/C	O/C
3	First name	patient_id first_name	O/C	O/C	O/C
4	Sex	patient_id sex	C	C	C
5	Date of birth	patient_id date_of_birth	C	C	C
6	Date of death	patient_id date_of_death	O	O	O
7	Zip code = postal code	patient_id place_of_residence	C	C	C
8	Country code	country_of_residence	C	C	C
9	Specimen number	specimen_number	C	C	C
10	Date specimen was taken	date_specimen_was_taken	C	C	C
11	Requesting hospital/laboratory	requesting_hospital	O	O	O
12	RIZIV/INAMI number of the applicant of the test	riziviami_number_of_the_applicant_of_the_test		C	C
13	Quality of the specimen	quality_of_the_specimen			C
14	Diagnostic procedure	diagnostic_procedure	O / HR	O / HR	HR
15	Organ	organ	C	C	C
16	Laterality	laterality	O / HR	O / HR for breast	
17	Morphology	lesion	C	C	C
18	Differentiation grade	differentiation_grade	O		
19	pT	pt	O/C*		
20	pN	pn	O/C*		
21	pM	pm	O/C*		
22	Degree of certainty (about morphology code)	degree_of_certainty_about_lesion_code	O	O	O
23	HPV high risk test results	hpv_high_risk_test_results			C if HPV test performed
24	HPV high risk types detected	hpv_high_risk_types_detected			C if HPV test performed
25	Nomenclature number(s)	nomenclature_numbers		O	C

O=Optional; C=Compulsory; O/C=Compulsory if INSZ/NISS unknown; HR=highly recommended

2.2. Inclusion criteria per project

2.2.A. Inclusion criteria for the classic CANCER-file

SELECTION BASED ON MORPHOLOGY-CODE

Range to select:

all morphology SNOMED codes M-80000 to M-99999 (equivalent for ICD-O-3: 8000/0 – 9999/9)

+ M-74003 + M-74009 + M-74413 (codes for severe dysplasia = carcinoma in situ)

+ M-74002 + M-74412 + M-67017 (codes for moderate dysplasia, CIN II, CIN2)

CIN2 is no longer considered as an obsolete code (see section 2.3.D) and should be added to the cancer-file inclusion criteria if used.

+ M-09420 (ypT0 : “no residual tumor after neoadjuvant therapy”)

- All malignant tumours, invasive or in situ (inclusive severe dysplasia and high grade intra epithelial neoplasia).
- All hematological tumours including the myelodysplastic syndromes and myeloproliferative diseases.
- All tumours of the central nervous system whatever the behaviour of the tumour (benign, low malignant potential, malignant).
- All urothelial cell tumours (low malignant potential, in situ, invasive).
- Ovary: malignant and borderline malignant tumours.

If analyses of the skin are executed by a separate laboratory for dermatopathology, please transfer this mail with annexes to your colleagues so they can learn how to transfer their data (if you do not already deliver this data).

These data are currently asked three times per year
(data from the first four-month period to be delivered by 10th of May
data from the second four-month period to be delivered by 10th of September
full year data to be delivered by 10th of February)

2.2.B. Inclusion for the BREAST & COLON-file

The datasets for the breast and colorectal specimens are identical; however, the structured files and protocols should be delivered in **separate files**.

SELECTION BASED ON ORGAN-CODE

Range to select:

1. For the structured file containing the encoded test results of all **breast specimens**:

For users of the ICDO-3 topo codes: all C50.X

For users of SNOMED 3.5VF organ codes (T-codes):

All codes T-04xxx + T-03430 + T-03431 + T-03432 + T-EA503 + T-EA509

In this selection, you should include all encoded test results of breast specimens, including negative results, benign and (pre)malignant lesions.

In July 2015 coding guidelines for breast samples were communicated through a newsletter sent to laboratories. This newsletter can be downloaded at the following link: [laboratoires | Belgian Cancer Registry](#)

2. For the structured file containing the encoded test results of all **colorectal specimens**:

For users of the ICDO-3 topo codes: all C18.X, C19.X, C20.X, C21.X

For users of SNOMED 3.5 VF organ codes (T-codes): all codes T-59xxx + T-58650 + T-EA566 + T-EA552 + T-EA573

In this selection, you should include all encoded test results of colorectal specimens, including negative results, benign and (pre)malignant lesions.

In April 2014 and October 2020 coding guidelines for colorectal samples were communicated through newsletters sent to laboratories. These newsletters can be downloaded at the following link: [laboratoires | Belgian Cancer Registry](#)

These data are currently asked three times per year
(data from the first four-month period to be delivered by 10th of May
data from the second four-month period to be delivered by 10th of September
full year data to be delivered by 10th of February

2.2.C. Inclusion criteria for the CERVIX-file

SELECTION BASED ON ORGAN-CODE

Range to select:

For users of the ICDO-3 topo codes: all C52.X, C53.X (and C57.8*-C57.9*)

For users of SNOMED 3.5 VF organ codes (T-codes):

All codes T-82xxx (exclusion of T-82050, T-82400, T-82410) +

All codes T-832xx + T-EA557, T-EA559, T-EA561 (and T-EA563*)

* the use of these codes is to be avoided during coding, please use by preference the codes C52.X or C53.X (ICD-O-3), or T-EA557 (= vagina), T-EA559, T-EA561 (SNOMED)

In this selection, you should include:

- All cervical and vaginal cytology test results including negative tests (no abnormalities), light or moderate cell abnormalities and (pre)malignancies.
- All cervical and vaginal histology test results including negative tests (no abnormalities), light or moderate cell abnormalities and (pre)malignancies.
- Results of high risk HPV tests.

HPV and cytology analyses done on request of other laboratories have to be delivered by BOTH the laboratory that executed these tests AND by the laboratory that asked for the tests, but the applicant of the test has to guarantee the information reaches the BCR.

These data will be asked 12 times a year

(All results validated since the previous delivery are expected by the 10th of each month

full year data to be delivered by 10th of February)

Points of attention

- For the monthly deliveries, all samples that have been validated since the previous delivery should be delivered. The selection by **sampling date** should therefore be broad enough to include all newly validated samples, i.e. **at least the previous two months**. Alternatively, **all samples since 1/1/2025 can be resent**. There is no concern if samples are sent more than once. For Clinisys users, there is no need to cancel the previous delivery.
- Fully validated results (including HPV result and integrated advice) should be forwarded, but validated cytology results (while still awaiting the HPV result) may also be forwarded.
- The monthly deliveries apply for all cervicovaginal samples, i.e. cytology samples, as well as HPV results and histology samples and this regardless of reimbursement.

2.3. Additional information regarding the variables

2.3.A. Additional information regarding the COMMON variables

- **National Social Security Number (INSZ/NISS)**

This variable is used for patient identification. In case the INSZ/NISS is lacking, the last name, first name, sex, date of birth and postal code must be delivered.

Complete and correct administrative data are essential to establish high-quality databases. Therefore, we recommend making the necessary efforts to deliver the INSZ/NISS for each patient. TAKE CARE: this variable should always contain 11 characters and be a **TEXT format**, since otherwise leading zero's will be lost.

- **'Country code'**

Please use the correct ISO-codes you can find on:

http://www.iso.org/iso/home/standards/country_codes/country_names_and_code_elements.htm

The country code refers to the country in which the patient is officially residing. The country code is a compulsory variable since malignancies are only taken into account for the incidence number of Belgium if the person has his/her legal residence in Belgium. Missing information about people residing outside Belgium will never be asked.

- **'Date specimen was taken'**

Take care to fill in the date **the specimen was taken**. Only if this date is unknown, **the date of reception of the specimen** or **the date of analysis** can be used. When date is missing, data cannot be treated!

- **'Requesting hospital/laboratory'**

Fill in the hospital/laboratory that sent the specimen, requested the pathological examination and to which the result is reported.

If you use abbreviations, please provide us with a conversion table.

If there is no requesting hospital/laboratory and the request originates from a private person, please mention "PRIVATE" for this variable. By providing us with this information, some missing or additional data can be asked (directly) to the applicant of the analysis instead of the laboratory that performed the analysis.

- **'Diagnostic procedure'**

The variable "diagnostic procedure" indicates if it concerns a cytology or a histology. This variable is not compulsory, but highly recommended when the diagnostic procedure cannot be deduced from other variables as the organ-code (e.g. T-EA503 and T-AE509 = breast cytology) or nomenclature. You can use the P-axis of SNOMED 3.5VF to fill out this field.

You can also use the following BD-codes (BD = Basis for Diagnosis):

Possible codes	Meaning of the codes
1	Autopsy, found by hazard
2	Histology of the primary tumour
3	Histology of the metastasis
4	Cytology/haematology
8	Cytogenetic and/or molecular test – tumor specific (only in association with histology)

Important: if the diagnostic procedure is not clearly provided by means of organcode, nomenclature or BD-code: all cervical samples will be considered by default as cytological examinations. For breast samples all organ codes will be considered as histological samples except for T-EA503 and T-EA509.

- **'Organ' (Topography)**

Please use the code of the sample in which the diagnosis is made, regardless of the organ in which the tumour takes its origin.

Please encode the organ as precisely as possible. For instance, sublocalisation for colon and skin and laterality for breast are important.

For this variable we attend the T-axis (T-codes) of SNOMED 3.5VF (T=Topography) should be used. A shortlist with the most frequently used SNOMED 3.5VF-codes is available on our website: [Codage et stadification | Belgian Cancer Registry](#)

You can also use the topography code of the ICD-O-3. Please use only one coding language to code the topography (or SNOMED 3.5VF or ICD-O-3).

Without a topo-code, the record cannot be extracted for the prevention files (breast/colon and cervix), following the BCR-rules for extraction and cannot be treated by the Cancer Registry.

If possible, you can include information about the **diagnostic procedure** within this variable, e.g. T-EA559 T-EA557: *prélèvement cytologique du col de l'utérus vagin*, indicating a cytological examination.

- **'Morphology'**

Please encode the morphology as precisely as possible. For this variable we attend the M-axis (M-codes) of SNOMED (M=Morphology) or ICD-O-3 morphology-codes.

Without this M-code, a cancer cannot be extracted for the Cancer-file following the extraction rules of the BCR-protocol and cannot be treated by the Cancer Registry.

For prevention files, please encode also negative, benign and (pre)malignant lesions.

If no information on the lesion is available, the value #NA (= Not Applicable) can be mentioned for the variable "Morphology".

- If the patient is known with a malignant tumor but there is no tumor in this sample (but this sample is related to the tumor – e.g. "healthy margins"), please code M-99993
- If the patient received a neoadjuvant therapy and there is no residual tumor (ypT0), please code M-09420
- If an additional test is performed without histological diagnosis (e.g. KRAS, HPV, EGFR, FISH,...), the code M-99998 has to be used (see newsletter on the Website).¹

To meet the quality criteria imposed by the BCR, other coding languages than CODAP/SNOMED 3.5VF/ ICD-O-3 will no longer be accepted. Only one coding language can be used in the delivered file (CODAP OR SNOMED). You can download a shortlist with the most frequently used codes from our website: [Codage et stadification | Belgian Cancer Registry](#)

See also section 2.3.D. for additional information regarding the coding of cervix-variables.

- **'Laterality'**

If possible, always mention the laterality. This can be done by means of the variable 'Laterality' for which you can use the G-axis of SNOMED or the following codes:

Possible codes	Meaning of the codes
1	Left
2	Right
#NK	Not known
#NA	Not applicable

Sometimes you can use a specific organ code from which laterality can be deduced, e.g. T-04030 for a left breast and T-04020 for a right breast.

¹ <https://kankerregister.org/fr/profplatform/laboratoire>

- **'Degree of certainty'**

For cervix samples this applies to the certainty about the morphology, not about the HPV test.

- **Missing information**

If certain information is not present in your database, you can fill out the column with:

#NS	not stated or not present
#NK	unknown
#NA	not applicable

2.3.B. Additional information regarding the specific **CANCER** variables

- **'Differentiation grade'**

When not specified in the morphology code (e.g. M-83313: *adénocarcinome vésiculaire bien différencié*) this optional variable can be delivered in a separate field:

Histological grading and differentiation

Possible codes	Meaning of the codes
1	Well differentiated
2	Moderately differentiated
3	Poorly differentiated
4	Undifferentiated / anaplastic
#NA	Not applicable
#NK	Not known
#NS	Not stated

- **'pTNM-variables'**

Please use different, separate fields to deliver these variables. Use the TNM 8th edition (see <http://www.wileyanduicc.com>) from 2017 onwards and take care of possible errata as for the previous editions.

The TNM is not applicable for every tumour or specimen. That is the reason why we cannot make these variables compulsory for every registration. However, when applicable (and present in the report), the TNM-variables should also be present in the structured file and not only in the protocol. Extraction of these variables out of the protocols by means of text-recognition is possible but this procedure is time-consuming and is always accompanied by a loss of quality, what must be avoided as much as possible.

2.3.C. *Additional* information regarding the specific BREAST/COLON variables

- **'RIZIV/INAMI number of the applicant of the test'**

A 'fail-safe' system is a back-up mechanism which ensures that patients with an abnormal screening result will have the appropriate follow-up. Within this 'fail-safe' mechanism, the variables 'requesting hospital/laboratory' and 'RIZIV/INAMI number of the applicant of the test' are necessary to be able to contact the persons responsible for the follow-up of the patient.

TAKE CARE: this variable should be a **TEXT format** and should by preference contain 11 characters.

- **'Nomenclature number(s)'**

Nomenclature can be useful to provide us with the information about the diagnostic procedure (difference between cytology/histology), especially for breast specimens.

In case of more than one nomenclature number, they should be entered separated by a comma (","). From 01/01/2014 on, delivery of nomenclature numbers for **breast and colorectal samples** is no longer compulsory but optional. The use of non-official nomenclature codes is allowed. Please provide the meaning of these codes.

TAKE CARE: this variable should be a **TEXT format**.

2.3.D. Additional information regarding the specific CERVIX variables

- **'RIZIV/INAMI number of the applicant of the test'**

See also section 2.3.C.

- **'Quality of the specimen'**

This variable is obligatory for **cervical smears** (cytology), not for histological samples.

Possible codes	Meaning of the codes
SUF	Sufficient: The sample is of sufficient quality to result in a reliable diagnosis.
INSU	Insufficient: No reliable test result could be determined, or the specimen could not be evaluated at all because it was broken or incorrectly labelled

Since **01/01/2013**, the codes 'SUF+' and 'SUF-' are no longer used. Both codes are pooled into only **one code 'SUF'** which indicates the sample is of sufficient quality to result in a reliable diagnosis.

The code **'INSU'** should only be used if no reliable diagnosis can be established. This implies that a new smear should be taken.

- **'Organ' (Topography)**

Please encode the organ (topography) as precisely as possible.

For ICD-O: Avoid the use of the unspecific codes C57.8 and C57.9. Use by preference the code C52.X and C53.X.

For SNOMED: for the coding of cytology samples, use by preference the following codes:

T-EA557	Frottis vaginal
T-EA559	Frottis cervical
T-EA561	Frottis endocervical

Avoid the use of the unspecific code T-EA563.

The selection remains based on the organ code →When coding the organ, a clear distinction should be made between cervix, vaginal dome, vaginal wall, vagina and vulva.

- **'Morphology'**

Also see section 2.3.A.

For correct coding of the cervical smears (cytology) and biopsies (histology), please follow the systematic overview of diagnostic codes as mentioned on our website. By coding the test results, **always take care to make a clear distinction between cytology and histology.**

According to the WHO classification of tumours of female reproductive organs (4th Edition, 2014, page 172), a two tier system of low- and high-grade intraepithelial lesions is more biologically relevant and histologically more reproducible than the three-tier CIN 1, CIN 2 and CIN 3 [1,2] and is therefore recommended. According to the 5th Edition of the WHO classification of Female Genital Tumours published in 2020, HSIL may be subdivided into HSIL (CIN 2) and HSIL (CIN 3), particularly for young women below the age of 30 years. The reason for this is the evidence that adolescents and young women show significantly higher regression rates of HSIL (CIN 2) compared to older women [3].

If for a patient both a cytological and a histological analysis have been performed and described in the same protocol, both the cytological and the histological diagnosis should be delivered in different records with the same sample/reference number.

If the cytological and histological results are mentioned in different protocols, both the cytological and histological diagnosis should be delivered in different records with the appropriate reference number and the correct sample date.

For screening programs, it is important to know which cytological exams are followed by a histological confirmation.

The variable "morphology" must be completed. If you are not aware of the primary lesion, the code #NA can be used.

The code M-99998 can be used but only in the context of an existing cancer (including for additional analyses).

2 new lesion codes:

12MT: triage at 12 months. In the case of triage at 12 months, this lesion code must appear in order to differentiate this triage at 12 months from other reasons for follow-up.

COTE : to be added if both the HPV test and the cytology are performed, regardless the indication or the reimbursement.

- **'HPV high risk test results'**

HPV high risk test results: select only one code	
Possible codes	Meaning of the codes
HPV-	Test performed, but no high risk HPV detected. If only low risk or intermediate risk HPV genotypes are detected, also code with HPV-
HPV+	Test performed, HPV high risk detected
HPVi	Test performed, no analysis or no reliable test result possible

All HPV results that are known should be coded and reported.

The list of internationally validated high-risk HPV tests that can be used in cervical cancer screening in Belgium can be found at [National Reference Center \(NRC\) for Human papillomavirus | sciensano.be](https://www.nrc.be/en/human-papillomavirus). This table contains a dynamic list of molecular tests for the detection of high-risk HPV and will be updated at least twice a year as new scientific evidence becomes available.

- **'HPV high risk types detected'**

Following 13 HPV-types are considered by the BCR as 'high risk HPV-types: HP16, HP18, HP31, HP33, HP35, HP39, HP45, HP51, HP52, HP56, HP58, HP59, HP68.

These include the 12 HPV types currently classified as carcinogenic to humans and one type (HP68) classified as probably carcinogenic to humans in the IARC monograph series [4,5].

Your HPV test should at least discriminate between the genotypes HPV 16, HPV 18 and the other high-risk genotypes since this information is essential to the decision of follow-up after an abnormal screening. As cervical cancer is **HPV**-related and prevention campaigns include vaccination of young girls, data on HPV genotype test results are very useful to evaluate the effect of the vaccination program.

- If your test allows further genotyping, all possible details should be coded and reported.
- If your test can only discriminate HPV 16 and HPV 18 from a range of several high-risk genotypes, the code **HPOT** should be used if high risk HPV types other than type 16 or 18 are detected

For coding individual genotypes and/or ranges, the codes in the table below should be used.

Multiple HPV's can be entered and must be separated by commas ",".

Examples:

* HP16,HP18,HP45: HPV types 16, 18 and 45 detected.

* HPOT,HP16: HPV16 in combination with another high risk type

HPV individual genotypes and /or ranges	Codes to be used
HPV 06	HP06
HPV 11	HP11
HPV 16	HP16
HPV 18	HP18
HPV 31	HP31
HPV 33	HP33
HPV 35	HP35
HPV 39	HP39
HPV 45	HP45
HPV 51	HP51
HPV 52	HP52
HPV 56	HP56
HPV 58	HP58
HPV 59	HP59
HPV 66	HP66
HPV 67	HP67
HPV 68	HP68
HPV 18/45	HPP2
HPV 31/33/35/39/45/51/52/56/58/59/66/67/68	HPOT (§)
HPV 31/33/35/39/45/51/52/56/58/59/66/68	HPOT (§)
HPV 31/33/35/52/58	HPP3
HPV 31/33/52/58	HPAA
HPV 33/58	HPO1
HPV 35/39/51/56/59/66/68	HPAB
HPV 35/39/68	HPO3
HPV 39/56/66/68	HPP5
HPV 51/59	HPP4
HPV 56/59/66	HPO2

(§) HPV high risk genotype different from HPV16/HPV18, if no genotyping other than HPV16/HPV18 is possible

- **Additional information about HPV-tests**

For the cervical smears we want to know the following information:

- Which laboratory performs the HPV tests?
- Which test is used for HPV detection?

These questions are repeated every year in order to have the most up to date information. If changes in the procedure for HPV testing took place during the year, please inform us.

- **'Nomenclature number(s)'**

This variable is essential in order to identify the reason for the analysis (screening, triage at 12 months,...) (see [Moniteur belge](#))

In case of more than one nomenclature number, they should be entered separated by a comma (","). Take care: this variable should be a **TEXT format** to allow correct treatment of the data.

Important: if the diagnostic procedure is not clearly provided by means of organ code, nomenclature or diagnostic procedure-code: the cervical samples will be considered by default as cytological examinations.

The field of the nomenclature codes must be filled in as completely as possible according to the following recommendations.

- a. Official nomenclature code: if reimbursed by RIZIV/INAMI
- b. Non-official (dummy) code: if not reimbursed by RIZIV/INAMI (please provide us with the meaning of each used dummy code)
- c. #NK: if the reimbursement by the RIZIV/INAMI is uncertain

It is recommended to send all the samples of the requested period even when no certainty exists about the nomenclature. Delivery of an incomplete file in which a lot of samples are missing must be avoided.

- **Additional information about the protocol**

For **screening samples** the following standardized information must also be included in your protocol:

- **Integrated advice:** In the context of screening in the general population for ages 25 to 64 (including triage after 12 months), the formulation of an integrated standard advice is mandatory. More information about the advice can be found at [Introduction of the HPV test in Cervical Cancer Screening in Belgium | sciensano.be](#)
- To facilitate the reporting of the full result including the advice by the clinical biology laboratories, we strongly recommend to explicitly add one of these additional 4 codes in the conclusion of your protocol :

Code	Signification
NILM	Negative for intraepithelial lesion or malignancy
ASC-US	Atypical squamous cells of undetermined significance
LSIL	Low grade squamous intraepithelial lesion
≥ ASC-H/AGC	More severe lesions (at least high grade)

References

- [1] Thomas, C. Wright Jr., Pathology of HPV infection at the cytologic and histologic levels: Basis for a 2-tiered morphologic classification system: International Journal of Gynecology and Obstetrics (2006) **94** (Supplement 1), S22-S31
- [2] Alan G. Waxman, MD, MPH, David Chelmow, MD, Teresa M. Darragh, MD, Herschel Lawson, MD, and Anna-Barbara Moscicki, MD, Revised Terminology for Cervical Histopathology and Its Implications for Management of High-Grade Squamous Intraepithelial Lesions of the Cervix: Obstet Gynecol. 2012 December ; 120(6): 1465–1471
- [3] WHO Classification of Tumours Editorial Board. Female genital tumours [Internet]. Lyon (France): International Agency for Research on Cancer; 2020 [cited 2021 Oct 21]. (WHO classification of tumours series, 5th ed.; vol. 4). Available from: <https://tumourclassification.iarc.who.int/chapters/34>.
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- [5] IARC, Monographs on the Evaluation of Carcinogenic Risks to Humans Volume 100B: A Review of Human Carcinogens: Biological Agents, International Agency for Research on Cancer, Lyon, 2012.